
From: Leigh Muething [REDACTED]
Sent: October 17, 2021 9:25 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Fwd: Submission to Law Amendments Committee for Bill No. 1

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Leigh Muething (he/ him/ il)
Grade 9 Citizenship, Grade 10 - 11 ELA
Horton High School



I work and live in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We are all Treaty people.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Leigh Muething [REDACTED]
Date: Sun, Oct 17, 2021 at 9:17 PM
Subject: Submission to Law Amendments Committee for Bill No. 1
To: <gordon.hebb@novascotia.ca>

Dear Mr Hebb,

Here is my submission to the Law Amendments Committee for the meeting regarding Bill No. 1. Please ensure that this is included in the meeting as well as in the public record of the meeting.

To: Mr. Gordon Hebb.

Office of the Legislative Counsel
CIBC Building, Suite 802
1809 Barrington Street

Regarding: Bill No. 1 – Elections Act (amended)

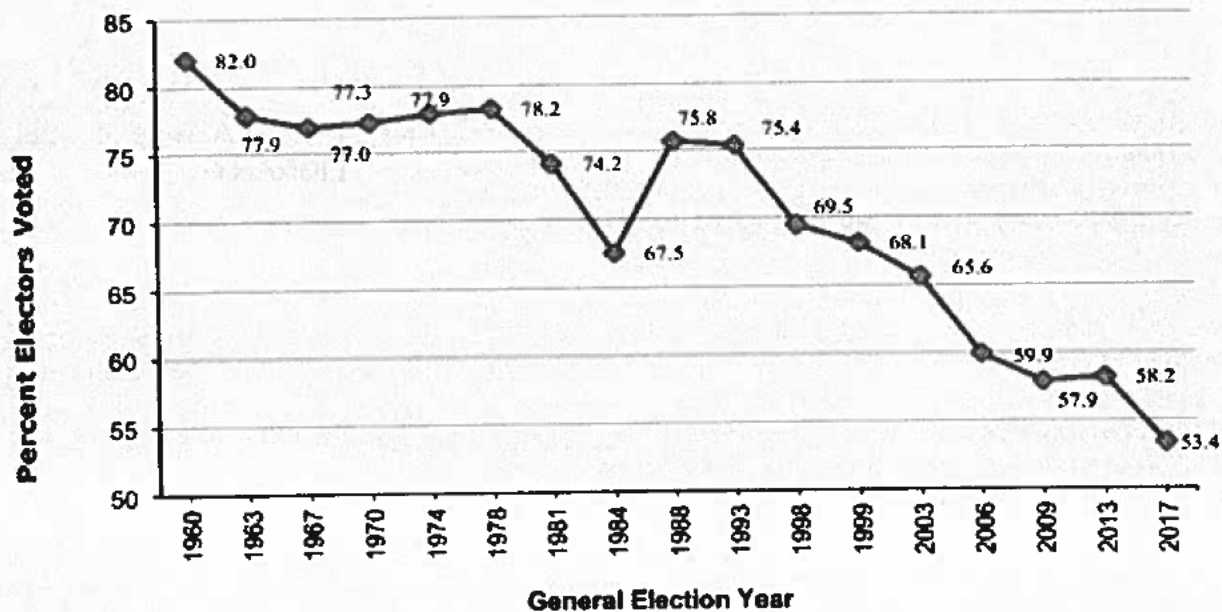
Dear Members of the Law Amendments Committee,

My name is Leigh Muething. I am a teacher at Horton High School in Greenwich. I teach Social Studies and English Language Arts. One of my key focuses is educating students on how they can engage with political issues in positive and informed ways and have a voice in society. One of the ways that I do this is through the Student Vote Program run by Civix Canada. This program engages students in understanding the election process, researching political platforms and then voting in school. The results of the vote are published online and students can see them as they would in a regular election.

As an educator, I have seen so many students become energized about politics and voting through this program. Some become involved in student politics and become leaders in our school community. Some become engaged in specific political issues that they learn about. Many of them become excited about voting in elections in the near future.

I am very concerned that the proposed fixed election date legislation (Bill No. 1) could damage this momentum. Holding future elections in mid-July would mean that we could not hold provincial Student Votes. Teachers across the province would lose an incredibly valuable learning tool and means of engaging their students in a real-life process.

Figure 4: Voter Turnout Since 1960



As you can see above, Elections Nova Scotia has noted that voter turnout has been steadily decreasing since 1960. With voter turnout so low (55% provincially in our last election) we should be ensuring that every opportunity is being made to engage youth to turn this around in the near future. Lori Turnbull (director of the School of Public Administration and an associate professor of political science at Dalhousie University) has pointed out that research is showing that "...people who start voting at a young age are far more likely to continue voting through their lifetime." (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/voter-turnout-provincial-election-1.6146321>) This is my hope. This is my goal. This is the purpose and aim of Student Vote and dedicated educators across the province. The current proposed election date of mid-July could threaten this.

I hope that you will consider these points carefully. I hope that you will consider changing the fixed election date to a time during the school year where educators would have time to plan and deliver Student Vote effectively. If we truly want a democratic system with increasing numbers of engaged citizens we must work together as decision-makers and educators to ensure this. This is one of those key pieces that could help us do this.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leigh Muething
Horton High School

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Grade 9 Citizenship, Grade 10 - 11 ELA
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